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ABSTRACT

The speaker notes specific areas in which research needs to be done on student alienation, teacher alienation, and the organization of teaching that helps create teacher alienation. (IRT)

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RESEARCH AGENDA FOR THE 80's:

SOME URGENT PROBLEMS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF SCHOOLS IN CANADA'S PROVINCES

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The title of this paper has to be one of the more arrogant, if not fatuous, ones at this 1978 Annual Meeting of the AERA. I sometimes wonder how I get myself into such predicaments. However, there's no turning back now, since the title has already been immortalized on page 235 of the Association's 334-page programme!

It is quite obvious that in any discussion of a research agenda some limitations need to be set. I have limited this paper to some problems in the administration of schools. Naturally the ones I have chosen to write about are ones which I believe to be of some importance.

Before beginning I should apologize for not conforming strictly with the overall theme of this symposium. There are several reasons. I believe that historians, sociologists, and political scientists are very much more able than persons like myself to provide you with detail of the very highly textured 'cloth' from which our social and political institutions derive their structures and their traditions.

With that caveat, permit me, though, to list but a few of the 'fibres' in order that you might have some idea of the sort of 'cloth' I am thinking about. In other words, what are some factors that are likely to contribute to institutions such as our schools, particularly their administration, being different from other countries.

This paper was prepared for the 1978 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Toronto, Ontario. The symposium at which this paper was presented was entitled, 'What's So Canadian About Canadian Educational Administration', Friday, March 31, 1978.

People. I'd like to be able to report that the indigenous people of Canada had some impact on our institutions, but, unfortunately, that is not the case. It is only in recent times that the 'newcomers' have begun to appreciate the cultural richness of the native peoples of Canada, now dangerously close to extinction. There were (and are) the Naskapi, Tsimshian, Salish, Kwakiutl, Athapascan, Sarcee, Nootka, and, of course, the Inuit of the North--and, many, many more. Examples of their culture have been documented as early as 1200 B.C.[1]

The two great and very influential founding cultures of contemporary Canada (some 2700-2800 years later) were the French and the English. Then there were the United Empire Loyalists, who fled from the colonies to the south just prior to the outbreak of the 1776 revolution. There were successive waves of immigrants from Scotland, Ireland, and England. The Chinese and Japanese, who built our railroad. And literally millions of people from such countries of Europe as Italy, Germany, the Ukraine, Norway and Sweden. And more recently, from Pakistan, the Philippines, and the Caribbean.

Religion. The role of the established churches - Anglican and Presbyterian in Ontario, Roman Catholic in Quebec. The pervasive character of non-orthodox churches and sects in the Prairie Provinces.

Statutes. The British North America Act of 1867 which gave exclusive powers to the Provinces in all matters related to education. And 100 years later, the Provinces finally obtaining exclusive powers in post-secondary education.

For most of the Canadians here at this symposium this will seem to be far too sketchy to have any value - and, to Americans - who I suspect are in the majority (since this is an American association), this digression may seem somewhat too long and even bewildering. However, I, for one, believe that the educational system of any country is ipso facto different from that of any other

country. The system which develops is inevitably some sort of evolutionary hybrid of the backgrounds, beliefs, and customs of the peoples who inhabit that country. Thus to ask what is so Canadian about education administration is to pose a question, the answer to which is almost a truism.[2]

But there is a further complicating factor which needs some elaboration. Did you notice the last two words in the sub-title of this paper- - "Canada's Provinces?" The more I have studied variations in the way education is administered in Canada the more I have come to realize that it can be very misleading to talk of Canadian education. The history, the traditions, the various arrangements for cost-sharing, the procedures for settling disputes between teachers and their employers, the division of responsibility in various curriculum decision areas, to name but five, are all quite different in Alberta, in British Columbia, in Saskatchewan, and .... In many ways to speak of Canadian education makes as much sense as to speak of European education. The fact is Canada has at least eleven autonomous educational governing jurisdictions - Ministries in each of the ten provinces, and, under the aegis of various departments of the Federal government, educational systems (or programmes) in the Northern Territories, in penitentiaries, and in countries overseas for dependents of military personnel.[3]

You know now that I am going to avoid talking about 'Canadian education.' It is ambiguous and suggests a simplicity which doesn't square with our reality.

You have no doubt deduced both from the title and from my remarks so far that I will not venture to postulate any items for a research agenda for, say, American schools, or for British schools. (The last time I was in an American school was in Eugene, Oregon in 1966.) I am even on thin ice in doing so for our own provinces. However, what I hope may happen is that persons who are familiar particularly with education in the Central and Atlantic Regions of

Canada will feel quite free to point out where my hypotheses are inaccurate for their part of Canada and to improve upon the questions posed. For persons familiar with American schools, are any of the problems I identify relevant to those schools? Of those that are, what solutions, if any, are being proposed? being applied?

Finally, I have not in this paper proposed research questions as such. What I have done, though, is share some of my impressions about the problems facing schools I have visited or problems which educators from a number of provinces have discussed with me. The questions I then pose are more like the ones a layman or school administrator might raise - that is, I have not couched the questions in any formalistic way. Researchers who might be intrigued by some of the discussion which follows will no doubt want to approach the questions or test the validity of the hypotheses in the ways most familiar to them.

Selected Problems in the Administration of Schools

The three problems which I have chosen to discuss in this paper have to do with students, teachers, and the ways in which schools are organized.

You might wonder why I am restricting my discussion to problems only at the school level? Why not include school boards or central offices? Why not Ministries of Education? I'm sure observers from many of the Provinces would want to point out, for example, how their Ministries are giving an alarming number of signs of wanting to recoup from local school boards the control governments once had over almost every facet of education. Others, interested in finance and economics would wonder why no mention of problems in these areas.

It is likely an inadequate reason, but I wanted in this paper to focus on that part of the education industry, if I might use that not too popular

term, where 'the rubber meets the road.' I hope there would be general agreement on the proposition that Ministries of Education, their officials, locally elected school trustees, their officials, the cost-sharing arrangements which each province makes for the financing of education - all exist so that schooling can take place.

Though it is not likely to be in my time at least, there could exist a jurisdiction, say, one of the ten provinces in Canada, where there was an excellent financial provision for educational purposes, a Ministry of Education which was manned by highly talented officials and headed by a thoughtful, wise Minister, and where there were school boards composed of conscientious and representative citizens, served by career educationists. But I would argue that all this superstructure, however necessary, would be for nought if the actual workers - the teachers - were not performing well, and, if their goals and the instructional materials which they had available to them were inappropriate to their students.

However, I would not want to give the impression that our only problems in education administration are to be found at the school level. That is just not the case. For purposes of keeping this paper down to a reasonable size I shall confine my attention to 'where it all comes together' - schools.

STUDENT ALIENATION

Certainly many educational psychologists and counsellors will raise their eyebrows at someone from the administration side of the education establishment commenting upon students and student alienation. It is likely to be seen as a serious breach of territoriality. Nonetheless I will risk the possibility of censure and even some sort of disciplinary action!

It has been my impression that not only has there been an increase in the

number of students 'turning off' from schooling but there has also been a lowering of the age where the turn off first begins.

If I am correct in this impression then there follow a number of questions which must be afforded a higher priority (than they appear to have now) in the Ministries of education and the research community generally.

Is the so-called turn off, or alienation, a product of some sort of generalized mismatch which students perceive - a mismatch between what they are offered (by way of learnings and experiences) and what they feel, perhaps intuitively, are their needs? How relevant, really, are the curriculum materials? For example, would observers fifty years hence, looking back at the materials and curriculum goals (implicit as well as explicit) being used in the schools today, agree that the curriculum was, in fact, appropriate and functional to this generation of young people?[4]

Or, is the turn off a product of a mismatch between what they hear and what they see? Are there inconsistencies between what teachers and principals (and superintendents, directors, board members, and Ministry officials ....) are saying and what they, and the society they purport to represent, are doing?

Permit me to identify some areas where inconsistencies, in fact, do exist. Health. The school, our society's symbol of knowledge and reason, on occasion and somewhat hesitatingly, is beginning to advocate no smoking, moderation in alcohol consumption, balanced diets, reduction in junk food consumption, and physical exercise. But what do students see? Educators smoking, drinking, eating junk foods, carrying more pounds (sorry, kilograms) and out of breath after climbing one flight of stairs. Cafeterias and corridors are lined with vending machines that dispense junk foods.

Sex (family life) education. Too little, too sterile, too late. I must confess, though, that in my view the school does not really have the competence

nor a clear mandate to offer education in human sexuality and interpersonal relations. In fact there are some specialists in this field who are coming to the conclusion that we do not know enough about how (or when) to best provide such instruction; or, indeed, whether the potential risks of, for example, psychological damage (resulting when education in this personally sensitive area is provided through mass formalized instruction), outnumber the potential benefits.

Equality of opportunity for women. What do students see? Women seriously underrepresented in the principalship; and, shockingly underrepresented among appointed officials in local school boards and Ministries of Education. And, until quite recently, females were not admitted to certain courses and career programmes which had been traditionally associated with male dominated occupations.

Dignity and worth of the individual. Educators have long enunciated the fundamental principle which was to be the foundation for both the curriculum and the process of education - namely, the dignity and worth of the individual. What do students see and feel? Schools operating in the style of a mass production enterprise: movement along fixed programmes, pre-set schedules, common examinations, and in very large buildings where very few students even get to be known by their own name.

Socio-political concerns. There is a deepening concern in Canada about whether we will survive in the form which we have come to know. There is also a concern about what appears to be a low level of national awareness - among our youth, among the population generally. Many Newfoundlanders, for example, are openly expressing regret that they joined in 1949. People in the Atlantic Region speak of people in Central Canada - whether they be French or English speaking, as 'they'. I

have heard it said that many persons in the Atlantic Region (and, perhaps to a lesser extent in the Western Region) see little difference in whether Southern Ontario 'money interests' come in to 'exploit' their resources or whether it is U.S. owned corporations. Both are regarded as foreign. Not very many British Columbians or Albertans find it easy to mentally include Quebecers and Ontarians when speaking of 'we'.

What are the schools doing? What of Canadian studies? What are the attitudes and behaviours of teachers and others in education? My impression is that educators are extraordinarily uninformed when it comes to the nature and workings of our political institutions and the historical antecedents of the regionalism and cultural tensions of today. Educators are very reticient about their nationality - almost ambivalent about their identity as Canadian citizens. One might say that many are, indeed, reluctant citizens - embarrassed at singing the national anthem or waving the 'maple leaf' on July 1st.[5]

This ambivalence, this reticence, this ignorance of the past on the part of educators must surely come through to children and young people. And if it does, could this not be another mismatch which students see and feel, and which further exacerbates and hurries the 'turn off'.

Is it possible that the turn off towards schooling, which seems so prevalent among our youth, can lead to or become generalized toward other institutions - the family, our political institutions, work itself?

Are schools capable of some sort of renaissance? Is the climate within the larger community one which can nurture a renaissance - even supposing there was the desire and the wherewithal within the educational workforce?

TEACHER ALIENATION

Over the past 3 or 4 years I have had opportunities to talk with a number

of teachers, principals and school board officials in British Columbia, as well as other provinces. I was interested in such matters as teacher turnover, transfer requests, absenteeism, alcoholism and morale, generally -- those being some of the more obvious indicants of job alienation.

My impressions are that all is not well. Why do I say, 'impression'? Why am I not presenting concrete data? I am aware that several school systems have done some internal studies but that the data are regarded by system personnel as so sensitive that the findings have never been (and will likely never be) published. /I would not be surprised to find out that much of the data have been withheld from the particular Boards in question (elected trustees). Nor would I be surprised if the local teachers' associations have not even been informed that such studies have been done./

At the risk of sounding like a Tom Cossitt I have to add that it would be most imprudent of me to reveal the names of these school systems. Furthermore, it is not very likely that many school systems in any of our provinces would allow an 'outsider' to try to get answers in these sensitive areas. I am thinking of questions such as: How does the level of alcoholism among teachers compare with levels among other occupational groups (who also render personal services), such as nurses? social workers? police? sales persons? dentists? What is the level of absenteeism among teachers? How do the Monday and Friday levels compare with other occupational groups? To what extent are individual school levels (of absenteeism) related to the particular person currently in the principalship? /One way to check this out is to trace teacher absentee levels and requests-for-transfer levels by principal and by school. I have been told that for some principals the levels are consistently higher than for others and that these higher levels 'follow' such principals when they transfer (or are transferred) from one school to another./

I have also heard that board officials in some jurisdictions have become increasingly concerned about the sorts of activities in which teachers become involved in their 'spare' periods, or on what are fairly commonly labelled, 'professional days'. As I understand it, the intent of granting teachers (usually only secondary teachers) 'spares' is to free them for marking, lesson preparations, and such like. Professional days are for such activities as curriculum revision, and workshops for updating professional knowledge and skills. I must say at once that there are considerable variations among school systems both as to the extent of such provisions and perhaps even the intent behind them. However, where such provisions do exist, there is a concern that a growing number of teachers abuse this 'free time'. Spare periods become bridge games and backgammon matches; professional days, bridge and backgammon tournaments. For example, in some schools of which I'm personally aware, local administrators have become rather paranoid about the possibility of these abuses coming to light (which would most surely result if, say, a newspaper reporter who had been tipped off, were to gain entry under the guise of a telephone repair person, for example, to, say, the second floor men's staff room). The level of anxiety has gotten so intense that rather than chance such an 'expose' the principal of one school organized a number of 'make work' activities in order that the teachers' spare time would be totally occupied. Those teachers who had already organized tournaments (or whatever) were, needless to say, quite irritated--as were those who had hoped to use the time in the way it was intended.

I have become persuaded that there is considerable 'soft' evidence of symptoms which point to the alienation of many teachers from the job of teaching. How pervasive it is or how deep it is can only, at this time, be impressionistic and speculative. And there may very well be significant differences not only from school to school but system to system, and even province to province.

What is there about teaching which might lead to (justifiable) job alienation? Certainly there are a great many people in our society who believe teaching is a pretty soft life with its 30-hour, 5-day week and its 197-198 day year. It is an indoor job and the physical environment is thought to be better than average--in terms of noise level, quality of the air (free from noxious gasses and dust) and so on. And, income and job security features are relatively good.

Drawing upon some findings and propositions from the rapidly growing literature on work research, which up until recently has been focussed on industrial and business organizations (mainly in Europe), let me propose some tentative hypotheses.[6]

Teaching, particularly in our larger schools, can and for many teachers does, in a great many instances, take on certain characteristics not dissimilar from the assembly line of mass production firms. There is, for example, a similarity in the repetitiveness of the work itself--the English teacher with multiple sections of the same course, and the prospect of doing the same work on into the foreseeable future. And the elementary teacher who will teach grade four again next year, and the year after, and ....

Then for a great many teachers--particularly in junior and senior secondary schools, there is the timetable. It is the Great Regulator. I'm sure it leaves many teachers feeling from time to time very much at its mercy. Typically the timetable is created by persons not directly involved in teaching. It dictates, in an impersonal way, what the teacher is to teach (i.e. what subject), to whom, when, for how long and in what place. Bells or buzzers, operated by an automatic, pre-set clock, control the length of each teacher period as well as the flow of groups of students from one room to the next.

What about teachers' career structure. As I have pointed out elsewhere

teaching is one of the occupations where 'up' really means 'out'.[7] To advance, to get 'promoted', is to leave classroom teaching for school principaling or counseling. There is no career path, such as is found in a university where, for example, a teacher may achieve successively higher levels of status, income, and other benefits, such as control over their own jobs, within the teaching ranks. The benefits that accrue to full professors are quite considerable over those of lower rank. In some universities special 'chairs' have been created and supported from income provided by special endowments from foundations and wealthy philanthropists. Appointments to those chairs normally carry a substantial salary--frequently higher than that of deans or the president of the university. Some institutions have special research professorships, which not only provide much higher salaries, but additional funds for research assistance and equipment.

The teacher's career structure in public systems, on the other hand, has fewer possibilities. It may include periodic moves from teaching lower grades to higher grades, from teaching in lower socio-economic communities to upper middle class areas, from teaching elective and remedial courses to teaching the more prestigious 'required' or university entrance courses. There is no hope for most teachers, for example, of having more and more control over their work day--more time, for example, to create new courses, update existing reading materials, take a month's leave to visit another system or talk with university based researchers in similar specialty areas. There is little hope of acquiring more clerical and other forms of assistance in order to free up time for more individual tutorial work with students.

Another key variable is the teacher's salary. It is pre-determined by a system-wide scale; an increase in pay does not indicate a job well done. The increase and its size bears no relation to the quality of the service rendered.

It does not discriminate between the person who is professionally able and responsible and the one who offers just enough so as to not get dismissed. Nor does it discriminate between the various levels of complexity and challenge - for example, between the teacher in an 'east end' school and one in a quiet middle class suburb.

In my view the absence of both a well-defined career structure, including a system of compensation which is linked to performance and complexity of task, serve as morale depressors for a goodly number of very able teachers. I might add that the enormous differentials in pay between teachers and administrators which are to be found in some school systems, certainly do not help. In one school the average teacher's salary was less than half that of the principal's salary. And one teacher could not resist pointing out that the old 'bastard' not only had this great salary advantage but he had two assistant principals, a half dozen clerical staff, and a whole wing of counselors to help him carry out the administrative function. Furthermore, it was very simple for him to get away whenever he wished--to attend conferences, luncheons, even an early afternoon game of golf.

Then there is the whole question of size of school. This matter has already been raised in the earlier discussion about student alienation. Nonetheless no serious examination of factors which could possibly contribute to teacher alienation can ignore the impact of school size. It would seem to me that the larger the size of the organization the greater the likelihood its members will perceive an impersonalness, a distance between themselves and the larger collectivity.

Let me conclude this set of speculations or hypotheses on teacher alienation with a few questions that hopefully will help bring the discussion back to where I began. If alienation is a fact (let's not at this point concern ourselves

about the validity of some of my ideas about possible contributing factors) what are some of the costs? It is in the contemplation of the costs of alienation that researchers (and provincial governments, and other funding agencies) might find the impetus (and the financial resources) to design and launch some serious research.

It is generally well known that in some other kinds of organizations cost studies have already been carried out. In the automobile manufacturing plants of Oshawa and Windsor, for example, detailed data exist on the number of cars which cannot pass final, quality control inspections. These cars either are returned to some station along the assembly line or are sent to a special area for remedial work. While it is not widely publicized, 'industrial sabotage' is believed to be the primary cause for the rather high levels of recall. And it is also known that Monday and Friday cars are more likely to have problems than, say, Tuesday or Wednesday cars.

But what of teachers? They aren't able to retaliate or give vent to their frustrations and feelings of lose of involvement by 'accidentally' leaving a wrench in the transmission compartment or by 'forgetting' to tighten the bolts on the front right shock absorbers. So what do teachers do? Nothing? Grin and 'bear it'? Turn to booze? Beat their spouse? kids? Develop ulcers? Or, do the less stoic ones develop an 'I don't give a damn attitude?'-do the minimum that they believe they can get by on? Do they occasionally take a day or two off now and again for 'mental health' reasons?

Is there a possibility that teacher alienation can be transmitted (unconsciously perhaps) to the students with whom such teachers are in daily contact? At what cost to our society (and to the lives of such students)? How many teachers would want their own youngsters to go to the school in which they teach? (Do you remember the study which was reported in the press not long ago

about what nurses thought of standards of hospital care? If my memory is correct on this, about 80% would not be too happy having a close relative confined to the hospital in which they themselves worked--and knew best.)

ORGANIZATION OF TEACHING

It is only fair that I come out in the open and declare what is really a strongly held belief of mine, that is, many of the ills which have been discussed in this paper thus far derive in large measure from the way schools are organized. The present-day organization of most schools differs little from the 'one teacher one class' mode of a century ago. In secondary schools the main extension of that earlier mode seems to be to 'one teacher-one subject'. Other (human) service occupations however, such as law or medicine or accounting, have been gradually shifting from individual (or solo) practices to group or co-op practices.

As I pointed out earlier, the clients of teachers, students, move in large groups in a manner much like ingots in a smelter or strawberries in a cannery. The conveyor belt for students is activated by the sounding of a bell or buzzer. Teachers are expected to be available at those instances to 'pour the molten aluminum' or to 'cull out damaged berries' (to borrow terms from other mass production enterprises), and to do so in the time frame which has been allotted, and to stop when the next signal is given. The work schedule is preset. It is the rule rather than the exception in most schools, I'm afraid, that teachers still have little, if any, influence on decisions that later become quite significant predeterminants of their work life. However, this lack of involvement is becoming less and less the rule in a great many other kinds of occupations--oil refining (example: the Imperial Oil refineries in Winnipeg), manufacturing of paper products (example: New Westminster plant of MacMillan-Bloedel), to name but two from among hundreds here in our own country.[8]

Of course, in a system such as the one which I have described, it is important that each teacher be at his/her appointed station at the appointed time. It follows, too, though, that it is absolutely vital for there to be a 'back-up' system should a teacher be unable to man that station. In most school jurisdictions this back-up system is quite elaborate, and adds an enormous cost--much larger than we would want to believe, to an already burgeoning public expenditure in education.

This back-up system (of 'substitute' teachers) is not only a heavy burden on a board of education's financial resources but tends to be dysfunctional for several reasons.

The 'sub' in most cases is unfamiliar with the students and with the particular working relationships the regular teacher has developed with them. The students 'know' that they can very easily sabotage a substitute's best efforts --by 'acting up', by later claiming that the substitute was 'weird', or that the substitute didn't explain 'it' very clearly, and so on. It is extremely difficult for the regular teacher to validate the various 'explanations' students offer as to why they haven't completed this or that assignment. Another reason why this system tends not to be very satisfactory is that before a teacher can be away sick there is an expectation (in many jurisdictions) that the teacher leave a seating plan for each class he or she would normally meet, as well as written plans which detail what the substitute is to do. This can involve quite a lot of additional work, if the plans are to be at all helpful, and can therefore be a considerable burden to someone who may already be quite ill. Of course, it is a totally unrealistic expectation in cases where teachers have no advanced symptoms of an impending illness.

It is no doubt clear from the foregoing that I believe the present way schools are organized keeps teachers locked in. They cannot participate, to

the extent they ought, in professional up-date programmes, for example, during the school term--unless, of course, substitute teachers are brought in. This would be out of the question simply on economic grounds as well as the potential disruption it would have upon the on-going learning activities of the youngsters who would be affected.

I must mention at this point that it has been a long standing practice in many school systems to require teachers to give up some late afternoons and evenings--as well as Saturdays--to participate in workshops, seminars, and such like. Quite rightly, teachers, through their professional associations, have been resisting any increase in these practices. Teachers are arguing that time for such essential activities ought to be built into the regular work week. There have even been suggestions that, with proper compensation, certain of these professional up-dating programmes be scheduled during a part of the two-month summer recess.

The locked-in nature of teaching also precludes teachers from participating in many real-world activities. They cannot, for example, attend luncheon meetings of various influential organizations--The Canadian Club, Board of Trade, or Rotary. Such real-world involvement could be quite valuable, it seems to me, to social studies teachers, for example. Teachers are frequently unable to make presentations to government task forces or Royal Commissions. It is just not possible for teachers in nearby school systems to attend various university seminars--such as we have at The University of British Columbia, in such fields as astronomy; physics, mathematics, plant and animal ecology--to mention just four.

Teachers' time is given over almost totally to teaching students. Virtually no time is available for the development and refinement of materials or for improving their own pedagogical techniques. They have almost no time (other than after hours) to interact on professional matters with their colleagues.

What are the roadblocks to teachers moving toward a group practice--or, to use the term fairly common in contemporary work literature, semi-autonomous work groups? What modifications would be needed in the application of such a concept in an elementary school setting? in a secondary school? Some experience in such applications is currently being documented in two countries that I'm aware of--Norway and Massachusetts, in the U.S.A.[9] There may be many others that have not been written up.

What form would a group practice take? What might be some of the potential benefits? Let's take the case of an English department in a senior secondary school. If the teachers in such a department were to establish a cooperative group practice they would want to take on the responsibility for determining who would do what, how, and, to some, extent, when. Of course, they would have somewhat less control, than is the case with some other professionals, over the matter of 'for whom', in that public schools are expected to accept all who must (or choose to) enrol. On the matter of course scheduling the teachers would quite properly seek a strong voice in the overall schedule of the school.

Presumably, too, the group practice concept calls for members to have a good deal of control over resource allocation. For example, they would want to determine for themselves the ratio between full and part-time and between professional and paraprofessional (including clerical) members. The ratios which an English department might believe appropriate to their needs and cirumstances might be quite different from those which a mathematics group might adopt--or, indeed, an English department in some other school.

In addition, the group would determine what policy would be best for them with respect to the temporary absence of any member--whether such absence was on account of illness, dentist's appointment, attendance at a seminar, or whatever. The group would also have policy-making authority (within the resources available) over such other matters as provisions for curriculum revisions,

preparation of new courses, and short term study leaves.

What I have tried to do is sketch very briefly what I have in mind when I refer to applying the semi-autonomous work group concept to school teaching. The teacher would in such an arrangement have a good deal more control over his or her work life. Control would be decentralized into the hands of those who would be most directly affected and, who, presumably, are most familiar with the setting (the dictates of the subject matter, the realities of the work space and the instructional resources) and with the clients to be served.

Clearly, such a decentralization has many implications for the quite rigid hierarchical structures presently in place in most school systems. In many school systems principals, and even department heads, have come to be looked upon as the 'guardians' of standards, and are frequently thought of as 'supervisors'. However, the growing body of literature in the field of work research is quite clear about the improvements which can come to an organization's productivity level, as well as to the level of personal satisfaction of its members, when supervisory and planning functions are extended to include those who are the most affected--the workers themselves. Would there be benefits accruing to schools and to their clients if teachers had a greater involvement in setting objectives for their respective departments, determining criteria for judging the success of their various programmes, and in assessing their own as well as their colleagues' performance?

Finally, is there any connection between the growing unease about all our educational institutions and what I have been suggesting in this final section, the sparsity of managerial innovations? Do Canada's educational managers pattern their practices after those in our business and industrial sector? If so, should we be worried that Canada overtook Italy last year as the world's most strike--and lockout-prone country, according to International Labour Organization (ILO) figures? [10]

Some Concluding Remarks

It is really not that difficult for persons who set their mind to it to come up with a list of research priorities for whatever field they might have particular knowledge and interest. But why would anyone want to undertake such an analysis--particularly when it involves a certain amount of crystal-ball gazing? In my own case, I have developed a fair bit of curiosity as to whether anyone else in this country will find merit in some of the ideas which have been set forth in this paper. Which ideas do not square with reality as they perceive it? I am particularly interested in getting the views of persons familiar with other regions in Canada--persons who have had a good deal more direct contact with schools than I have had in the past ten years.

Of course, I am curious, too, about which of the 'agenda items', if any, are valid in other cultural contexts outside of Canada. Perhaps there isn't anything even peculiarly Canadian about the research agenda I have proposed in this discussion paper.

NOTES

1 I mention the names of some of the native peoples of Canada to further emphasize the historic differences which exist among the major geo-political subdivisions of North America.

It may be of interest that while Cretans of the late Minoan period were painting the wild boar hunt mural at the Palace of Tiryns in Southern Greece about 1200 B.C., the Salish people of the Fraser River Valley (in British Columbia) were sculpting small stone figures of high artistic quality. (See, for example, Dickason, Olive Patricia. 1972. Indian Arts in Canada. Ottawa: Indian Affairs and Northern Development, p. 12.)

2. There are a number of scholars who have analyzed (in much greater depth) the various socio-political-historical factors that contribute to the character of present-day Canada. The following are a few examples.

Greenfield, Thomas B.
1976 "Biculturalism, multiculturism, and the crisis of purpose in Canadian Culture.' Pp. 107-136 in Merrill Swain, (ed.), Bilingualism in Canadian Education: Issues and Research. 1976 Yearbook of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education. Edmonton: The Society.

Schwartz, Mildred A.
1974 Politics and Territory: the Sociology of Regional Persistence in Canada. Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Simeon, Richard and David J. Elkins
1974 'Regional political cultures in Canada.' Canadian Journal of Political Science, VII (September): 397-437.

3. The variations in the goals, structures, and processes among Canada's educational systems became quite evident particularly in the documents which were prepared recently for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) study of education in Canada.

OECD
1975 Review of Educational Policies in Canada. Five Reports: Atlantic Region, Quebec, Ontario, Western, and Government of Canada. Toronto: Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC).

4. A colleague, Ted Aoki, has raised a number of questions concerning the assumptions which underlay the curricula of our schools as well as the processes of curriculum development.

Aoki, T.
1977 'Theoretic dimensions of curriculum: reflections from a micro-perspective.' Canadian Journal of Education 2:49-56.

5. Tomkins, too, has commented on the attitudes of educators and the plight of Canadian studies in the public schools of our country. Symons, who undertook a very comprehensive examination of Canadian studies in our universities, has also commented on the non-response of educators on the matter of national survival.

Tomkins, George
1977 'Canadian education and the development of a national consciousness: historical and contemporary perspectives.' Pp. 6-28 in Alf Chaiton and Neil McDonald (eds.) Canadian Schools and Canadian Identity. Toronto: Gage.

Symons, T.H.B.
1975 To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies. Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

It was Symons who observed:

> As things now stand, there are few other countries in the world with a developed post-secondary education system that pay so little attention to the study of their own culture, problems and circumstances in the University curriculum. (Symons, 1975: 123).

6. Some examples of the work research literature which I have in mind include:

Albeda, W.
1973 Participation in Management: Industrial Democracy in Three West European Countries. Rotterdam: University Press.

Warr, Peter and Toby Wall
1975 Work and Well-Being. London and Toronto: Penguin.

7. Wallin, J.H.A.
1967 'Faculty input: a function of a college's incentive system'. Educational Administration Quarterly 3 (Winter) 74-87.

8. I am presently attempting to collect examples of other innovative practices in a wide variety of Canadian organizations--business, industrial and public sector (including 'third sector,' Crown corporations). But it is not an easy task - partly because there aren't that many examples and partly because senior officials are reluctant to discuss details, as many of the projects are in early, rather delicate stages of implementation. One recent study was completed on the modified work week.

Wood, Jack M.
1977 'Some effects of a modified workweek'. The Canadian Administrator' XVII (October): 1-6.

At the national level, the Conference Board in Canada has recently issued a discussion paper calling for some new initiatives to heal the considerable differences that exist among employers, employee groups, and government. See,

Malles, Paul
1976 'The road to consensus policies: challenges and realities.' Occasional paper no. 4. Ottawa: The Conference Board in Canada.

9. Ronco, William C.
1977 Jobs: How People Create Their Own. Boston: Beacon Press.

Thorsrud, Einar
1974 'Development and utilization of human resources: a general view.' Oslo: Work Research Institute. (Mimeographed paper)

10. As reported on page 1 in The Province, 22 November, 1977. The headline was 'Canada Strike Leader.'